

SIERRA SUMMER FESTIVAL OF THE PERFORMING ARTS

BY NANCY H. WILLIARD



Summer 2010 marked the 33rd season for the [Sierra Summer Festival](#), one of the longest running cultural arts organizations in the Town of Mammoth Lakes. Surrounded by vast acres of forest bordered by the Ansel Adams and John Muir Wilderness Areas, 32 miles southeast of Yosemite National Park's eastern entrance, Mammoth Lakes is 7880 feet high in the Eastern Sierra Mountains of California. The Sierra Summer Festival has, since 1978, produced classical concerts to delight the residents and visitors of Mono and Inyo Counties.



In 1983, the Eastern Sierra Symphony Orchestra (ESSO) began with eighteen pioneers playing

Mozart. This was the 27th anniversary season of the ESSO, the area's only full 70 plus member symphonic orchestra.

Each summer excellent, professional musicians perform in the ESSO for a week beside students as young as 12 and local amateurs under the direction of maestro, Bogidar Avramov. Local artists compete to have their work produced as a fine art poster to publicize the season.

In June, our chairman, Pete Watercott, visited the local band classes and spoke to them musician to musician. As he played selections from Beethoven, he noted key changes and discussed history of musical instruments such as the piano forte. For summer of 2010, our theme was "*Beethoven, the Mammoth.*" Chuck Scatolini, a local actor, provided narration at several of the concerts to enhance the understanding of the music for newcomers and children. We produced CDs of this narration and of select musical pieces and donated them to the local junior and high school band classes. All profits from the sale of the "*Visions of the Eastern Sierra,*" a special multi-media concert on DVD produced in summer 2008, still provide funds for music and art scholarships. After the

summer festival, another board member, Vic Guder, accomplished clarinetist and saxophone player, spent five days with the school students. Members of the Sierra Summer Festival Board and participating musicians make their mentoring a high priority throughout the year.

Funding from the California Arts Council Creating Public Value grant allowed us this last season to reach out to other listeners. In the past we have provided free tickets for students. This year we reached out to seniors, providing free tickets and free transportation. We also were able to translate the programs into Spanish and provide free tickets to interested members of our Hispanic community. We increased our publicity efforts and improved our web site. A larger variety of media in a larger demographic promoted our events in metropolitan Los Angeles and Reno. As a result we doubled our attendance! Surveys from last year are already helping us to hone our efforts to reach new audiences.



This 34th season, we are responding to survey information by providing a Sierra Pops concert in a new venue, the Convict Lake Resort. This will also be the debut of Scott Hosfeld as our Associate Conductor. A new style of music in a new outdoor site with a new conductor will be an exciting event. The Thursday ensemble

concert will feature the best of our musicians in "Classical Roots." Friday and Saturday in the Mammoth Mountain Conference Center will offer "Music from Enchanting Lands" directed by Bogidar Avramov, Musical Director and Conductor, and Stephanie Everson, Choral Director. Throughout the week, students and amateurs will participate in rehearsals and mentoring sessions with experienced professionals. Surely the sounds of orchestral music rising into the mountain peaks above the clear blue of Convict Lake will lift the spirits of all listening.



The music performed is of the highest caliber, designed for broad appeal, intended to satisfy and enrich the cultural needs of the audiences from the rural communities of Mono and Inyo Counties, and visitors. We continue to promote artistic excellence and provide cultural opportunities for all those in our community.

We benefit:

- 🎵 Youth and local musicians, with opportunities to study with high caliber professional musicians;*
- 🎵 Local music enthusiasts with low cost, accessible, local, professional orchestral productions; &*



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*🌀 Visitors by providing excellence
in music and art.*

Without the support of the California Arts Council's Creating Public Value grant we would not have been able to expand our audiences this last summer. We have also added new supporters from the Mammoth Lakes Foundation and Union Bank of California. Eastern Sierra Transit Authority is eager to assist again this next year with transportation for the disabled and elderly. Long standing supporters also assist. The Mammoth Lakes Women's Club provides refreshments and St. Joseph's Parish of Mono County and Mammoth Mountain Resort continue to offer venues at reasonable cost. The sound of a new musical season will begin at Convict Lake Resort in 2011. Come and join us for an inspirational musical experience in a truly unique setting!



All photos by Susan Morning.

Sierra Summer Festival of the Performing Arts receives funding from the [California Arts Council](#)'s [Creating Public Value Program](#), which supports arts organizations in rural and underserved communities, and is managed by Lucero Arellano (larellano@cac.ca.gov).

